

The DÆMONIAC.

BEING THE
SUBSTANCE
OF A
DISCOURSE

DELIVERED IN
HAVERFORD-WEST,
In MAY, 1753.

By JOHN CENNICK.

“Come and hear all ye that fear God, and I
“will declare to you what he hath done for
“my soul.” Psalm lxvi. 16.

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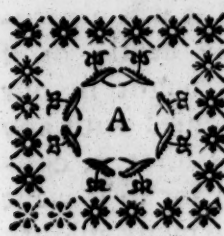
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T H E
D Æ M O N I A C.

L U K E viii. 39.

Return to thine own house, and shew how
great things God hath done unto thee.



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 M A N who had before been pos-
 sessed with a legion of devils,
 was set at liberty by our Saviour,
 and sitting at his feet cloathed
 and in his right mind, when
 observing his merciful deliverer
 about to enter into a ship, and
 to depart from that country, intreated him to
 let him go along with him; but our Saviour,
 for his own wise and best reasons, would not suffer
 it then, but said to him, in the words of the text,
 "Return to thine house, and shew how great things
 God hath done unto thee;" or, as St Mark relates it,

“ Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee,” Mark v. 19.

There was something very singular in this Man’s disorder, the manner of his cure, and deliverance, as well as in our Lord’s not suffering him to go with him; of all which I purpose to consider a little, before I speak directly of the words of the text.

We have no room to doubt of many wonderful possessions besides this and others in the time of our Saviour, in the first ages of the church, in the days of the reformation, and even now in our own time. Exorcisms were frequently used among the Primitive Christians; with fastings and Prayers they sought the deliverance of such people, and certainly found the prayers of faith availed much in such cases.

I see no reason why the gift of casting out devils and dispossessing evil spirits in the Name of the Lord Jesus, should not now be given, as well as formerly, unless on account of the incredulity of this sinful and adulterous generation, who atheistically would either mock at the cure, as if it was mere imposture and art, or pretend it was a natural disease and no possession of the devil; or if such immediate cures should be wrought in our times, if the miracle could not be denied with any good ground, they would say it was forcery, conjuration, and dealing with the devil; for so it went of old, and hindered our Master to do many mighty works in his own city Nazareth, because of unbelief. By whatever means a soul in the hands of satan is released, it must be confessed our Saviour is the cause. He only can preach deliverance to the captives, and loose them that satan hath bound in body or soul. He alone has the Right to say, *it shall

shall not stand, when a covenant is made with death and a league with hell. At his word and in his name a host of devils and legions of wicked spirits must fly. With a word he can release a soul, let its case be bad and deplorable as it will.

Though some are in a particular manner possessed of the devil, and it is above the reach of any human creature to account for their disorder and behaviour, &c. yet in another sense I esteem all distracted and mad people possessed; and this has been also the mind of many children of God and learned and pious men, and has some ground in the scripture. We read of a certain * Father who besought Christ for his son, who was lunatic, and when the child was brought to him, he rebuked the devil and he departed out of him; but all the behaviour of the dæmoniacks or possessed persons, of which we have often long accounts in the gospel, answers to that of lunatics or mad people, in our times. I will only observe, in a few instances, how nearly they resemble each other; first, their being able to break their chains; 2dly, loving to roam in solitary places among tombs; 3dly, going naked; 4thly, not being to be tamed easily; 5thly, casting themselves into the fire and water, cutting themselves, and uttering blasphemies and such words as must come immediately from the devil. And farther, we may observe daily, that however unapt persons have been to do any of these things before, after they have been once turned in their heads, as the expression is, they do it all eagerly, and another spirit rules, and something supernatural shews itself soon; they can endure hunger, cold, and hardships surprisngly, and travel, rage, labour, and speak on without sleeping, to a wonder. All this

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* Matt. xvii. 14, &c.

I have said, as my reasons for thinking lunatics possessed people; and I have observed, the generally known causes of madness have not been any humility, meekness of spirit, or even a religious disposition, but rather an extreme love of the creature, or, I would say, lust; also often an intolerable pride in the learned, who will account for every thing and comprehend like God. Sometimes an excess of anger and fury, or a known and abhorred self-conceitedness, fondness of fine cloaths, of riches, of beauty, or honour, and often a being awakened in a legal manner, and in attempting to make themselves perfect and righteous, and to attain to certain lengths in their own strength and by their own works, is the means of some peoples falling into this unhappy condition. But here it must be observed, that self-righteousness is at the bottom of all; for who have heard of a poor sinner's coming into such distress, I mean one poor in spirit, who is conscious of his lost estate and incapacity to help himself, but who sinks before our Saviour under a sense of his own wants and miseries, and yet is well convinced no one can help, or ease him beside Jesus; such an one does not rage because he cannot achieve high things, nor grow impatient because he cannot cleanse himself; but he rejoiceth that the Lamb has loved sinners and will receive them; he is glad of the fountain of his blood, and washes there; and though he may have been greatly withstood by the enemy, and has felt the weight of his guilt like a heavy burden, and, like Paul, could neither eat or drink for want of mercy, this must not be looked upon as madness; (would to God all the world were so mad!) no, this is a quite different condition; no wild fire rages here, no blasphemous speeches

speeches come out of the mouth; no, all is the effect of a real hunger and thirst for righteousness, and a longing to be forgiven, and such shall surely obtain their wishes; let them tarry the Lord's leisure, and he shall comfort them; let them wait upon him, and he will help them, and not one of them shall perish.

But though I have said so much, I would not be misunderstood, as though I thought all such possessed or mad persons should be lost. I have far more favourable thoughts, and hope rather these may possibly be some of those who are given over to the devil for the destruction of the flesh, that their spirits might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Perhaps such heavy chastisements may have befallen them here, that they may find mercy hereafter.

I will now proceed to speak of the man in the text, whom I look upon, in his worst estate, as a lively picture and emblem of every carnal or natural man.

When our Saviour landed in the country of the Gadareans, a man met him who for a long time had been possessed of devils; he wore no cloaths, he dwelt in no house, no bonds or chains could bind him, but he brake all, and abode in the mountains and in the tombs, crying and cutting himself with stones: This is the description of his sad estate; and how nicely does it agree with the spiritual sad estate of a natural man? He wears no cloaths before God, but, as long as he is without Christ's righteousness, as long as he is not made all glorious within, nor covered with the covering of God's spirit, he is naked; all his sins and secret uncleannesses, all his falls and corrupted nature is open and naked before the Lord and all the angels, and except Jesus and his righteousness cover his sin and hide his iniquities,

he will find himself in a shameful state, when God's eyes of fire try the secrets of all hearts. May I not also say, he has an unclean spirit? Does not his impurities and lusts rule him? Are not his eyes full of adultery, his lips full of unclean songs and jests? His hands and heart are they not unclean? And may it not be said with all propriety, he has been possessed of devils a long time? For ever since the fall, satan has had us all, as it were, in his hands and in his possession; but especially is he in his hands whom no laws of God can tame, no commandment nor threatnings bind, no loving intreaties keep within bounds, but he breaks all, and at all events and hazards is a bond-servant of the devil. His will, his desires, his appetite, his affections and lusts, his pride and passions break through, and no man can tame him. He dwells in no house of God, is not in the fold of the good Shepherd, nor does he nor can he love them that are. He lives among the tombs, among the dead; he loves those who are dead in sin, and the dead and dry conversation of the world suits him; he lives in pleasure, and is dead while he lives. He cries and cuts himself; this directly answers to his sinning against all the convictions of the Holy Ghost and his own conscience; he takes a certain pleasure in cutting and tormenting himself; and though the horror and pain which at times he must feel, must extort from him bitter cries, yet madly he rushes forward, "as the horse into the battle," and adds sin to sin and gall to wormwood!

'Tis as remarkable, that when our Saviour came in sight, "he fell down and besought him not to torment him, but let him alone," and asks, "What have I to do with thee? O Jesus thou son of God!" So afraid are people in their lost estate of being saved
out

out of it. They dread our Saviour's deliverance, and are angry to be stopped in their course. They would be glad if Jesus would let them alone, and not trouble them with convictions, nor look upon them as he did on Peter, or speak to their hearts as to Paul, "Why persecutest thou me?" Could they have their wish, their own will, then they would enjoy their health, be very rich and honourable, live long in pleasures, eat, drink, and be merry, and quite forget there is a world to come, an eternal judgment; for when our Saviour at any time mercifully brings these things to mind, or would reason with their hearts, and ask, Why will ye die? they are afraid and say to him as Felix did to Paul, "Go thy way for this time," or beseech him, like the man in the text, "Jesus, torment me not! let me alone, thou son of God!" Poor people! Who are mad if these are not? They call the children of God mad, and count them beside themselves; but none are so truly beside themselves, as such who rashly venture on, and will not be saved from their sins. On the other hand, those whose lives they count madness, are the only people who are in their right mind; for they have laid up treasures in heaven, they have found the pearl of great price, and laid hold on eternal life; they have true and real pleasures, without the sting with which temporal enjoyments end, and possess a solid and lasting peace, which passeth all understanding.

But I must observe, all this intreating of our Saviour not to torment him, and worshipping him, &c. was not till Jesus had commanded the unclean spirits to come out. Satan would fain have kept his hold, and that is the reason why every where he makes such a noise and stir where he is likely to lose a soul; and he knows, should the work of
our

our Saviour go on, he must quit his possession and be gone. It seems not one wicked spirit alone had seized this poor man, but many, and therefore he said, "My name is Legion;" but even this is written for our instruction; for there are people who have been divinely called, and Jesus has cast out the strong man armed, viz. satan, who kept the house and spoiled his goods, abolished the old crimes, and tore to pieces the pride, quenched the lusts, and trampled upon their honour, and cleansed the nest of every unclean and hateful bird, and made the den of thieves an house of prayer.

But the careless heart again have wandered from the Lord, their love grown cold, and the evil spirit that had constantly sought to return to the place whence he came out, at last gets admission, and he brings many others more wicked than himself, and they come and make their abode there, and the last estate of such people is worse than the first, and, as it were, a legion guard them, lest another attempt should be made to rescue them: And perhaps this might have been the case of Mary Magdalen, and very likely of this poor man, who nevertheless found mercy; and the accounts of their salvation are handed down to us, to teach us, that though some have made their last state worse than the first, and have become seven times more the children of the devil than they were before, though they have sinned away all grace, and lest the fountain of living waters, and though satan has bound them as with a legion, yet even in this case it is no where said, they cannot be saved, for Jesus can yet deliver them. If they had made a covenant with death and a league with hell, he knows how to dissolve the conditions and obligations with the blood of his New Testament. Let
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not souls who fear they are in such a state be hopeless or despair, "there is yet balm in Gilead, there is still a physician there," one who can break asunder the bars of iron and brass, and bring the prisoners out of captivity, and heal such as are oppressed of the devil, his name is Jesus, and he has the keys of hell and death. No God can deliver after this manner, nor save as he saves. How did the whole legion move at his word? Had all the wicked spirits in the bottomless pit possessed the man, it had been the same thing; at the word of our Saviour all must have yielded, and when he commands, Give up! let my people go! it is done. Let then such souls who lie under any dreadful apprehensions of this sort, apply to him, he will be their Saviour, he will stand their friend, and they shall know that "he hears the poor when he crieth, the needy, and him that has no helper."

When the devils found they must depart, they begged leave to enter a herd of swine which were feeding near the place; and when they had obtained leave, presently the whole herd, about two thousand, ran violently down a steep place into the sea and were choaked, to the amazement of all those that followed Jesus, and those who kept the swine. I know there are some people who have even dared to ask, With what right our Saviour could cause such a loss to the owners of the swine, and at once perhaps reduce them to poverty? These might as well ask, atheistically, Why a high wind at sea may overwhelm a ship, and ruin the master? or, Why an earthquake shall swallow up a whole town? Or a fire be permitted to make many families desolate in a few hours?

I wonder

I wonder any called Christians would even suffer the thought, since they confess that Jesus is the Lord, and all is his in heaven and earth. It is no injustice in him to take all away from us in a moment, and should he do it, who can ask him, What dost thou? Are not all the beasts of the forest his, and all the cattle upon a thousand hills? Cannot he do what he will with his own? But then, say some, it looks as if he could be pleased in the ruin and distress of his poor creatures. No, by no means; we have no grief which does not touch his heart; He could therefore in the days of his flesh so readily weep and be affected, when he saw Mary and Martha weeping over their brother's grave, or the widow of Nain lamenting over her dead son. Scarce a blind, or lame, or leprous person came in his way but he had compassion on them, and knew, if sin had not been in the world none of all this could have happened; therefore his heart always pitied, and his hand was always stretched out to save the oppressed, and that often, before it was asked. When therefore satan has leave or permission to do harm in the world, to raise storms, to cause wars and bloodshed, or make families desolate by fire or water, or bring a murrain among beasts, the best way, and most becoming humble and meek children, is to think, "his ways are in the deep waters, and his footsteps are not known;" and wait till the day when he shall make his just dealings as clear as the light, and his righteousness as the noon day. So much may be said, that without doubt it has been the means of bringing many to heaven, that in this world they met with many losses, crosses, and trials, were poor, and stripped of all things. He is a God of equity, he often takes away temporals
to

to give us eternal happiness. He tries his children often, like Lazarus at Dives's gate, that he may give them their comforts and possessions in a city that has foundations, in a kingdom which cannot be shaken. Doubtless many that are now in heaven adore the Lord that once in the world he put forth his hand and touched all that they had, tho' they at the time did not know why it was, but were ready to think like Naomi, "Call my name Marah, for the Lord hath dealt bitterly by me;" now they confess with joy, "It was good for me that I have been afflicted." On the other hand, many who have perished, now lament that here they had their portion, and in this life. He gave them their desire, and sent leanness withal into their souls. Of what advantage was it to Dives to be cloathed with scarlet and purple, to drink and feast with his five brethren, and afterwards be cloathed with scarlet flames, and want a drop of water to cool his tongue? Of what real benefit has it been, think ye, that some have so prospered in the world, and come into no misfortune like other folk, neither were plagued like other men; their bull did not fail, nor their cow cast her calf; they had gold like dust, and were obliged to pull down their barns to build greater; when God, in the midst of all their plenty and fulness, calls them to eternity with, "Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee?" Let it therefore satisfy thee, when any heavy trials or losses befall thee, that he that sits in heaven rules all things well, and trouble not thyself because of the destruction of the herd of swine; thou dost not know but that it was the only way to convince the owners and keepers of them who Jesus was; and though, like Peter, they prayed him to depart from them for the present, perhaps it

was

was only out of a deep sense of their unworthiness to have him upon their land; and very likely thou mayest see them with a better inheritance, in the day when he shall deal in righteousness and mercy to all the nations. I will leave them therefore here and pursue my design, and speak of the once unhappy but now highly favoured man. He was just now in the possession of many devils, but now in the care of the Saviour and Bridegroom of his soul. He was lately raving up and down the mountains, and restlessly wandering in the wilderness, but now he sits at Jesu's feet, and has found out eternal rest. He was before wild, so that no man could tame him, nor cords nor fetters bind him, but now is in his right mind. He hears the voice of the Son of man and lives. He chooses the good part, which shall never be taken away. This is indeed to be in ones right mind. He a little while ago wore no cloaths, but is now cloathed, body and soul, and the shame of his nakedness shall not appear. He was his own tormentor and cut himself with stones, but now he sits under the shadow of the fan of righteousness, who is risen upon him with healing in his wings. He used formerly only to frequent the tombs and gloomy and desolate places, now see he is among the living, and has found everlasting life in the Lord his God. O happy man! happy situation! happy place! happy change! May all the spiritually mad and possessed share, like thee, the unbounded and free sovereign grace of our dear Redeemer!

But now, when the Lord hath done his Father's business in these parts, and was ready again to go into the ship, the man on whom he had shewed so much mercy, prayed him to let him go with him, but Jesus suffered him not for the present, but said

said to him, "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord has done for thee, and has had compassion on thee." As if he would have said, Hereafter shalt thou follow me and be with me for ever, but now go and tell of thy deliverance to thy poor relations and friends; thou hast been heretofore a burden and grief to them, they have shared deeply in thine affliction, go and let them partake of thy joys and mercies; tell them what a merciful and compassionate Lord and Saviour thou hast found, and be a preacher of free grace to them, that they may come also after me and be my disciples.

It seems also strange that he who was continually calling men to him, and who let Bartimeus and others whom he had healed follow him, should now make exceptions against this poor man's coming after him, or refusing him that mercy which all were invited to; but this was certainly the reason our Saviour had for not allowing him then, he knew how many friends, relations, and neighbours he had who were not called to the kingdom, and therefore appoints his new convert to be his witness and preacher, that through his mercy others might obtain mercy and be saved. He could go and tell them what an unhappy wretch he once was, how satan made him his tool and slave, how he had lived without peace, without rest or comfort, and without God in the world, but now could he say, I that was afar off, am brought nigh to God: I that was a stranger to him, am now a fellow-citizen with the saints and with the household of God: I once wandered and was as a sheep that went astray, but the Shepherd of Israel, the Keeper of Jacob, has sought me and brought me back to the Bishop of my soul. The more I served satan, the more miserable I was; night and day I was unhappy: A legion once possessed

fessed me, and the enemy thought to have his desire
 and fulfil his lust upon me, but I am now saved, I
 have now obtained deliverance, and am now a monu-
 ment of God's unmerited and free love. I do not
 doubt but many also of his friends, who saw and
 heard him when he did return home, believed and
 were set on thirst to be acquainted with Jesus; they
 saw before them one who a few days before was
 in the most deplorable condition of all creatures un-
 der heaven, now a saint, a saved man, a blessed
 witness that there is salvation, and one against
 whom the gates of hell cannot prevail, and so could
 not help longing to become his disciples, and par-
 take with their friend his great mercy and liberty.
 I believe, if it was not for this, it would be far
 better for us and all the children of God, as soon
 as they are converted, to be taken home to our
 Saviour directly, out of all danger of grieving him
 again, or relapsing into coldness or carelessness. But
 our Saviour's mind is, that we should go home to
 our friends, and tell them what great things the
 Lord hath done for us, and how he has had com-
 passion upon us, and not come home to him till we
 have brought others also with us to see Jesus; thus
 are we like sheep come from the washing brook,
 every one bearing twins. In this sense, therefore,
 even our sons and daughters, our servants and hand-
 maids must prophecy, and tell what the Lord has
 done for their souls.

If the Redeemer should call home his children as
 soon as he had pardoned them, he would have then
 no church upon earth, and the awakened souls
 would have no fold, no one to comfort them, but
 like poor orphans would live like the most desolate
 people indeed. We should not then be too eager
 to beseech our Saviour to follow him home, till he
 please

please; it is better to be resigned, and so live, so wait upon him, so speak, so labour, and believe in the world, that at any time when he calls for us we may be ready to go and follow him upon mount Sion, and go no more out. This shall soon be our destiny, we shall quickly go to him and see his face. Let us for the present help our friends and neighbours, and be as salt in the earth. Let us tell them what we have experienced, and how the Lord has had compassion upon us. Let us blaze abroad his fame, and be ready to give every one a reason of the hope that is in us, and relate how we were when in our first estate, how we were by nature children of wrath, giddy and careless, and led captive by the devil at his will, how we were when awakened, how athirst for mercy and forgiveness, how we found grace, and were found out and washed and healed by the good Shepherd, in whose blood and righteousness we have been cleansed, and covered, and cloathed, and now can sit down at Jesus's feet in our right mind. How our hearts leaped within us for joy when the blessed moment approached wherein we were visited by the day spring from on high, and when God our Saviour took away the unclean spirit, and put his Holy Spirit within us. But perhaps many hear me to-day who, if bid go home and tell their friends what great things the Lord has done for them, could say nothing, having never experienced his pardoning mercy, nor seen his salvation. People who perhaps can only tell how God has kept them from want, how he has raised them from sickness, given them friends, kept off their enemies, and provided wonderfully for them in the world, saved them from many dangers, given them to be born and educated in a christian land, and trained them up in the best church,

in the happiest constitution, given them their right senses, &c. All this is well ; but this the Deist, the Turk, the Jew blesses God for, as much as you ; this is not the one thing needful, the main and chief blessing, for that is the revealing Christ in the heart, the releasing and translating the soul out of the kingdom of satan into the kingdom of God's dear Son, the snatching them out of the world and sin, as brands out of the burning, the overflowing all their vicious and unruly passions, lusts, and inclinations, with his death, sweat, and blood, and so washing the inner man in the laver of regeneration, and giving him a new birth, and the witness of the Spirit with their spirit that they are the children of God. O that ye all knew this, and could go home to your friends and tell them this joyful news, I was lost, but am now found ! I was once dead and knew not Jesus, I was a servant and vassal to his enemy, and to the world, and even despised the liberty of the Lord my God, and put his salvation far from me ; but the Lord has had compassion upon me, he has done great things for me, and holy is his name, he has now opened my eyes, and I see my part in his merits ; he has opened my ears, and I have heard the voice of the Son of God, and live an eternal life. He burst in pieces the chains that made me a prisoner, and delivered me into the glorious liberty of the children of God. I now roam no more for happiness in vain ; I now am no more unhappy ; I sit down like Mary, and like the man once possessed of the legion, at Christ Jesus's feet, cloathed with his salvation as with a garment, and with his righteousness as with a robe, and am now set to rights and saved, and in a right mind. May the merciful and compassionate Lord of all awaken every one to a true sense of his natural, bad, and wild
estate,

estate, and save you thus; and till he takes you home to his Father's house to be with him for ever; may you have grace to tell thus his tender mercies to others: And all ministers, may it be given to them in particular that they may do it, till having won many thereby to the kingdom, and turned many to righteousness, they may return home in a good time, and in their last hours, when they shall pray our Saviour to suffer them to follow him, he may say, "Come up hither," and so they be for ever and ever with the Lord. O Lamb of God grant this to my own soul. Amen!

F I N I S.

